

Serial No. 10/593,274
Docket No. SH-0058PCTUS

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(RYU.029)

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 3, 4, 11, and 12 without prejudice or disclaimer and amend claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9, 10, and 14-19 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An elongating method of an optical fiber base material, wherein, in an elongating process of elongating an optical fiber base material by heating the optical fiber base material in a heating furnace ~~so~~ such that a diameter of the optical fiber base material is reduced, before the optical fiber base material having a distorted portion is elongated from an end thereof, the distorted portion of the optical fiber base material is corrected by being heated to be softened in the heating furnace such that the distorted portion is corrected by its own weight,

wherein the elongation is started after the optical fiber base material is attached to a hanging mechanism such that said optical fiber base material is hung in the heating furnace, after the distorted portion of the optical fiber base material is heated to be softened, and after a difference between an elongation axis and an end of one of the optical fiber base material and a dummy rod attached to the optical fiber base material is reduced and judged to be 10 mm or less.

2. (Previously Presented) The elongating method according to claim 1, wherein when the optical fiber base material is heated to be softened in the heating furnace, a heater to heat the heating furnace is heated to a temperature in a range of 1,800 °C to 1,900 °C.

3. - 4. (Cancelled).

5. (Currently Amended) The elongating method according to claim 1 ~~3~~, wherein the optical fiber base material is hung in such a manner that the distorted portion is positioned lower and the elongation axis is substantially parallel to a plumb direction.

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6. (Currently Amended) The elongating method according to claim 1 3, further comprising:
examining whether the optical fiber base material is to be hung in the heating furnace without being in contact with the heating furnace, before the optical fiber base material is hung.
7. (Currently Amended) The elongating method according to claim 1 3, wherein the difference is detected by using a noncontact position detecting apparatus.
8. (Original) The elongating method according to claim 7, wherein the noncontact position detecting apparatus is one of a laser measuring device and an image processing apparatus.
9. (Currently Amended) The elongating method according to claim 1 [4], wherein the difference is detected by using noncontact position detecting apparatus.
10. (Currently Amended) A method of elongating an optical fiber base material, comprising:
correcting a distorted portion of the optical fiber base material by heating the optical fiber base material to soften the distorted portion, the distorted portion being softened such that the distorted portion is corrected by its own weight; and
after the correcting of the distorted portion, elongating the optical fiber base material from an end thereof,
wherein a difference between an elongation axis and an end of one of the optical fiber base material and a dummy rod attached to the optical fiber base material is reduced and judged to be 10 mm or less.
11. - 12. (Cancelled)

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13. (Previously Presented) The method of elongating according to claim 10, further comprising:

hanging the optical fiber base material in a heating furnace for the heating of the optical fiber base material such that the optical fiber base material and the heating furnace do not make physical contact.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of elongating according to claim 10 ~~11~~, wherein the difference is detected by using a charge-coupled device camera.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of elongating according to claim 10, wherein the optical fiber base material comprises an outer diameter of 40 mm to 180 mm.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of elongating according to claim 10, wherein the optical fiber base material comprises quartz glass.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of elongating according to claim 10 ~~11~~, wherein an elongation support rod made of silicon nitride ceramics is attached to the dummy rod.

18. (Currently Amended) The elongating method according to claim 13, wherein a the dummy rod projects from the heating furnace.

19. (Currently Amended) The elongating method according to claim 10 ~~11~~, wherein the a charge-coupled device camera measures a position of the elongation axis on an image in advance, and obtains an image of the dummy rod in a direction perpendicular to the elongation axis of the optical fiber base material.